

## Enzo's by klutzysunshine

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**Summary:** With Jim home and recovering after his rescue from the Russian prison, he and Joyce finally go on that date.

## Enzo's

With Hopper home (Joyce had permanently moved him into her house) and on the mend, they decided it was the perfect time to finally go on that date they planned before his "death". "Are you sure you're up for this?" a worried Joyce asked him again.

He sighed, exasperated. "For the tenth fucking time, yes. I am ready to finally go on this date. Are you ready?" he shot back.

"Damn straight," she answered, beaming at him.

He couldn't help but sigh fondly. "You're so lucky I love you."

"Nah, you're the lucky one." She winked at him and he snorted.

"Damn straight," Hopper echoed. He kissed her, grabbed her hand, and the two of them headed to her car. He was glad the kids weren't home to fuck with them - they didn't need that stress tonight. They had enough riding on this anyway.

It took Joyce and Hopper a while to get to the restaurant but fortunately, they had reservations. The two of them were escorted to their table and they sat down to look at the menu. "You finding anything good?" Joyce questioned.

He nodded. "Of course. You?"

"Definitely." Joyce's eyes flickered to him and she watched him try to find something to order. "How are you really, Hop?"

Hopper reached across the table and grabbed her hand. "If I have an issue, I'll tell you. Promise." He knew Joyce had been on edge for a long time and was constantly worried about him, which was sweet, but he couldn't take it anymore. It was one of the reasons he had agreed it was finally time to have that date they missed.

She lifted his hand up and kissed it. "You better." She knew she was driving him up the wall but she was still scared for his safety. Being stuck in a Russian prison for so long had fucked him up, even if he didn't want to admit it.

He grinned at her and then went back to his menu. They ordered a few minutes later when the waiter came back and continued to make small talk. They had banned all talk of kids but that didn't last very long. "You really think El is doing okay now?"

Joyce nodded. "You don't have to worry about our girl - she's a strong one and she's thrilled you're with us again. Losing you hurt her but like me, she didn't believe you were dead. And that faith kept us going until we found you."

"I'm so fucking glad. I ever thank you for saving me?"

"So many times I've lost count." She picked up her glass and sipped on her water before setting it back down.

"Fuck, I really want to kiss you." He couldn't believe this woman had agreed to give him a chance after all the bullshit they had been through.

Her smile was dazzling. "What's stopping you, Hop?"

Hopper stood up, let go of her hand, and then leaned down to kiss her. They pulled apart when their water came back to see if they needed anything. He sat back down, unable to stop smiling at Joyce.

While they were eating their meals, Joyce noticed that he was starting to become a little uneasy. His eyes kept dancing around the restaurant, clearly looking for a threat, and he visibly tensed up every time somebody passed by their table or opened the door to come in. She kept an eye on him in case they needed to leave but he seemed to be doing okay for the time being. "You ready to go or do you want dessert?" she asked him after they finished eating.

"Do you want dessert?"

"Jim," she gently chided.

He sighed and slumped his shoulders. "I should be able to handle one fucking meal but can't even do that. Ruined our date, right?"

"Of course not - you've been through a traumatizing experience, Hop. You're allowed to have meltdowns. And this was a fantastic date.

You're not dead! That's pretty fucking great in my opinion. I'll get dessert to go and then we can go home so you can relax and/or talk with the kids. How's that sound?"

"Fantastic," he admitted.

"Great." She called over the waiter for the check, she paid, and then they left to make their way back home.

The kids greeted them at the door and El immediately hugged her father, sensing he needed her comfort. Joyce put their leftovers and the dessert away (making sure to hide it, or else someone would eat it before she could) before returning to Hopper's side. "I love that you know exactly what I need," he told her. "Thank you, Joyce."

She shrugged. "Eh. You don't have to thank me - you'd do the same for me. And we have plenty more dates in our future so get used to it."

He couldn't wait and told her so.

While Hopper wasn't at his best, at least he wasn't alone. He had the woman he loved and their kids (all of them, even if they couldn't all be there) by his side. He could get through anything as long as he had them. And Joyce would make sure he took care of himself and got the help he needed to recover.

They had many more dates at *Enzo's* ahead of them. Neither of them wanted to waste any more time after losing so much of it due to various events out of their control.